

## Comptroller of the Currency, Treasury

## § 19.196

(c) *Procedure for imposition of sanctions.* (1) Upon the motion of any party, or on his or her own motion, the administrative law judge or other presiding officer may impose sanctions in accordance with this section. The administrative law judge or other presiding officer shall submit to the Comptroller for final ruling any sanction entering a final order that determines the case on the merits.

(2) No sanction authorized by this section, other than refusal to accept late filings, shall be imposed without prior notice to all parties and an opportunity for any party against whom sanctions would be imposed to be heard. Such opportunity to be heard may be on such notice, and the response may be in such form as the administrative law judge or other presiding officer directs. The administrative law judge or other presiding officer may limit the opportunity to be heard to an opportunity of a party or a party's representative to respond orally immediately after the act or inaction covered by this section is noted by the administrative law judge or other presiding officer.

(3) Requests for the imposition of sanctions by any party, and the imposition of sanctions, are subject to interlocutory review pursuant to § 19.25 in the same manner as any other ruling.

(d) *Section not exclusive.* Nothing in this section shall be read as precluding the administrative law judge or other presiding officer or the Comptroller from taking any other action, or imposing any restriction or sanction, authorized by applicable statute or regulation.

### § 19.193 Censure, suspension or debarment.

The Comptroller may censure an individual or suspend or debar such individual from practice before the OCC if he or she is incompetent in representing a client's rights or interest in a significant matter before the OCC; or engages, or has engaged, in disreputable conduct; or refuses to comply with the rules and regulations in this part; or with intent to defraud in any manner, willfully and knowingly deceives, misleads, or threatens any cli-

ent or prospective client. The suspension or debarment of an individual may be initiated only upon a finding by the Comptroller that the basis for the disciplinary action is sufficiently egregious.

### § 19.194 Eligibility of attorneys and accountants to practice.

(a) *Attorneys.* Any attorney who is qualified to practice as an attorney and is not currently under suspension or debarment pursuant to this subpart may practice before the OCC.

(b) *Accountants.* Any accountant who is qualified to practice as a certified public accountant or public accountant and is not currently under suspension or debarment by the OCC may practice before the OCC.

### § 19.195 Incompetence.

Incompetence in the representation of a client's rights and interests in a significant matter before the OCC is grounds for suspension or debarment. The term "incompetence" encompasses conduct that reflects a lack of the knowledge, judgment and skill that a professional would ordinarily and reasonably be expected to exercise in adequately representing the rights and interests of a client. Such conduct includes, but is not limited to:

(a) Handling a matter which the individual knows or should know that he or she is not competent to handle, without associating with a professional who is competent to handle such matter.

(b) Handling a matter without adequate preparation under the circumstances.

(c) Neglect in a matter entrusted to him or her.

### § 19.196 Disreputable conduct.

Disreputable conduct for which an individual may be censured, debarred, or suspended from practice before the OCC includes:

(a) Willfully or recklessly violating or willfully or recklessly aiding and abetting the violation of any provision of the Federal banking or applicable securities laws or the rules and regulations thereunder or conviction of any offense involving dishonesty or breach of trust;

(b) Knowingly or recklessly giving false or misleading information, or participating in any way in the giving of false information to the OCC or any officer or employee thereof, or to any tribunal authorized to pass upon matters administered by the OCC in connection with any matter pending or likely to be pending before it. The term “information” includes facts or other statements contained in testimony, financial statements, applications for enrollment, affidavits, declarations, or any other document or written or oral statement;

(c) Directly or indirectly attempting to influence, or offering or agreeing to attempt to influence, the official action of any officer or employee of the OCC by the use of threats, false accusations, duress or coercion, by the offer of any special inducement or promise of advantage or by the bestowing of any gift, favor, or thing of value.

(d) Disbarment or suspension from practice as an attorney, or debarment or suspension from practice as a certified public accountant or public accountant, by any duly constituted authority of any state, possession, or commonwealth of the United States, or the District of Columbia for the conviction of a felony or misdemeanor involving moral turpitude in matters relating to the supervisory responsibilities of the OCC, where the conviction has not been reversed on appeal.

(e) Knowingly aiding or abetting another individual to practice before the OCC during that individual’s period of suspension, debarment, or ineligibility.

(f) Contemptuous conduct in connection with practice before the OCC, and knowingly making false accusations and statements, or circulating or publishing malicious or libelous matter.

(g) Suspension, debarment or removal from practice before the Board of Governors, the FDIC, the OTS, the Securities and Exchange Commission, the Commodity Futures Trading Commission, or any other Federal or state agency; and

(h) Willful violation of any of the regulations contained in this part.

[56 FR 38028, Aug. 9, 1991, as amended at 68 FR 48265, Aug. 13, 2003]

**§ 19.197 Initiation of disciplinary proceeding.**

(a) *Receipt of information.* An individual, including any employee of the OCC, who has reason to believe that an individual practicing before the OCC in a representative capacity has engaged in any conduct that would serve as a basis for censure, suspension or debarment under § 19.192, may make a report thereof and forward it to the OCC or to such person as may be delegated responsibility for such matters by the Comptroller.

(b) *Censure without formal proceeding.* Upon receipt of information regarding an individual’s qualification to practice before the OCC, the Comptroller or the Comptroller’s delegate may, after giving the individual notice and opportunity to respond, censure such individual.

(c) *Institution of formal disciplinary proceeding.* When the Comptroller has reason to believe that any individual who practices before the OCC in a representative capacity has engaged in conduct that would serve as a basis for censure, suspension or debarment under § 19.192, the Comptroller may, after giving the individual notice and opportunity to respond, institute a formal disciplinary proceeding against such individual. The proceeding will be conducted pursuant to § 19.199 and initiated by a complaint which names the individual as a respondent and is signed by the Comptroller or the Comptroller’s delegate. Except in cases of willfulness, or when time, the nature of the proceeding, or the public interest do not permit, a proceeding under this section may not be commenced until the respondent has been informed, in writing, of the facts or conduct which warrant institution of a proceeding and the respondent has been accorded the opportunity to comply with all lawful requirements or take whatever action may be necessary to remedy the conduct that is the basis for the commencement of the proceeding.

[56 FR 38028, Aug. 9, 1991; 56 FR 46667, Sept. 13, 1991]